

# San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission

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January 29, 2015

**TO:** Design Review Board Members

**FROM:** Lawrence J. Goldzband, Executive Director (415/352-3653; [larry.goldzband@bcdc.ca.gov](mailto:larry.goldzband@bcdc.ca.gov))  
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**SUBJECT: Draft Minutes of January 5, 2015 BCDC Design Review Board Meeting**

1. **Call to Order and Attendance.** Karen Alschuler called the meeting to order at approximately 5:40 p.m. Other Design Review Board (DRB or Board) members in attendance included Cheryl Barton, Jacinta McCann, and Gary Strang. BCDC staff in attendance included Bob Batha, Brad McCrea, Ellen Miramontes, and Rosa Schneider .

2. **Approval of Draft Minutes for the December 8, 2014 Meeting.** The Board approved the minutes with no revisions.

3. **Alameda Boatworks (First Review).** The DRB conducted a first review of a proposal by Boatworks, LLC and William Lyon Homes to construct a 9.48-acre housing development at 2235 Clement Street in Alameda. The project would include 182 housing units (portions of 19 units are within the shoreline band), an approximately 1.32-acre open space public access area along the waterfront, and two sidewalks within the development (largely outside the Commission's jurisdiction) that would be dedicated public access and connect to existing city streets. Within the open space area, proposed public access improvements include a split-level pier, an approximately 600-foot long portion of the Bay Trail, a lawn area, waterfront overlooks, a tot lot, picnic tables, barbeque pits, four parking spaces, and an entry plaza. The DRB had previously reviewed a different development proposed for this same property on January 10, 2011.

a. **Staff Presentation.** Rosa Schneider introduced the project and the issues identified in the staff report, which included: physical access to the park, adequate, usable, and attractive public spaces, and sea level rise.

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b. **Project Presentation.** Philip Banta of Boatworks, LLC introduced the project and said he was pleased to be returning with a superior project this time around. He stated that since 2011, the site and shoreline have been cleaned up through collaborative efforts by the applicant, the EPA, the Army Corps of Engineers, and BCDC. He stated that the current proposal includes 182 units, including single family detached and multi family attached units, 21 units of affordable housing, and at least 14 for disabled veterans. He explained that the overall width of proposed open space has been increased and includes more textures, designs, and materials than the previous version of the project.

Scott Roylance, Director of Land Acquisition at William Lyon Homes, presented the exhibits. He gave an overview of the neighborhood and explained that one key theme is how to bring the public from adjacent streets to the estuary's edge, highlighting the 24-foot-wide pathway along A Street.

Mr. Roylance pointed out that the 2011 submittal for this site had a slightly different shoreline, which has now been modified through the clean-up work that filled in some portions of the shoreline. He explained that the 'pier' is on fill, not piles, and is a continuous concrete protrusion from the shoreline. The ADA ramp on the pier goes to the bottom level, and the pier will be maintained and owned by HOA and available to the public.

Mr. Roylance highlighted the ten-foot-wide Bay Trail with a four-foot-wide decomposed granite shoulder on the Bay side. A bioretention area with 'usable grasses' where the public can picnic and play ball is proposed between the Bay Trail and the residences on the eastern side of the project. A secondary public walk would provide access from the residences to the open space. The planting palette was taken from the BCDC Shoreline Planting Guide, and the grasses chosen would be good for both public recreation and for bio-retention.

Scott Hilk, Vice President Project Manager at William Lyon Homes, pointed out that while the 9- and 10-plex buildings are attached at ground level, the upper levels have open air between them, offering relief and articulation, which is a unique aspect and appropriate for the site.

c. **Board Questions.** The Board members asked several questions.

Mr. Strang asked if there is a roof plan to show the gaps between upper floors of the units. He was curious about their locations, and how they related to views from the sidewalk and the experience of being at the site. Several Board members asked where views to the water and shoreline would exist, and asked about the gap between buildings along the shoreline. Mr. Hilk responded that the buildings still function as a mass and that there are no views from the street level through the buildings to the water.

Ms. Alschuler and Mr. Strang asked for more information on the paseos. Mr. Roylance responded that they would be internal connections between the units, and would lead to the streets rather than to the waterfront.

Ms. McCann asked whether the 12 feet of landscaping is within the residential lots. Mr. Roylance responded that this would be publicly accessible open space, owned and maintained by the HOA.

Ms. Barton suggested that there be more of a separation between the pavement of the street, parking, and sidewalk, by perhaps including a row of trees.

Ms. Alschuler asked about the slopes of the bio-retention basins. Mr. Hilk responded that it is shown correctly in the cross section, with not much elevation change. Mr. Roylance added that it is intended to filter water into an underlying drainage system, rather than to retain water.

Mr. Strang asked why the pier structure has two levels. Mr. Hilk responded that this design allows the incorporation of an ADA-accessible ramp, while also getting people closer to the water. He added that the water reaches around the sides of the pier, but does not go underneath.

d. **Public Comment.** There was no public comment.

e. **Board Discussion.** The Board members discussed the following:

Ms. McMann stated that the overall framing and circulation works well, but that A Street could be strengthened. She recommended putting effort into making a greener street section that looks very public, and enhancing the plaza at the waterfront where A Street ends. She asked about the purpose of the space, and if it could be enhanced with less parking, more trees, and more seating.

Ms. Barton stated that A Street ending at the water is a nice setup, but it needs to be studied more.

Mr. Strang agreed and asked how much parking is appropriate. He suggested using tall grasses to cover car wheels as one approach.

Regarding parking, Ms. McCann favors one ADA spot, and said that four cars weakens the design. Mr. Strang said that four spots would always be in use.

Ms. Alschuler and Ms. Barton agreed that it is important to think about the termination of Oak Street at the waterfront, since many people will likely arrive there as well.

Mr. Strang said that while 22 feet of building and path is a nice buffer to the units on Oak St., the four feet on the other side adjacent to the street would be a “throwaway and look like a property line.” He suggested reconsidering the full 36-foot-wide area and providing a wider landscaped buffer along the street side.

Mr. Banta asked for clarification on ‘framing,’ and asked if the Board was referring to an allee of trees along the sidewalk.

Mr. Strang responded that the Board is referring to the general idea of massing and directing people toward the water. Ms. Barton said that the green street idea doesn't have to be a typical Parisian allee and can be done in a number of ways. Ms. McCann said that to distinguish the trees from looking like someone's front garden, they would need some size and mass; tree pits could be cut in between parking and the street.

Regarding potential water access, BCDC staff explained that the applicant is not opposed to water access but that the Corps permitting process is long, and water at the site is shallow. Mr. Hilk agreed that a float would have to be farther out in the water, and said that the pier was designed so the end of the ramp could have a gate opening to a future gangway or be extended. They have attempted in the design to allow for adaptable use in the future.

Regarding the bio-retention basin, Ms. Barton questioned whether people would actually sit there. Ms. McCann agreed that people would probably not sit or recreate there, but that it could still "look lovely," and that it would be important to have enough seating along the path and possibly plant more trees. Ms. Alschuler said that the most successful bio-retention areas have many species and offer some habitat value, and recommended viewing the area in this way rather than for recreation.

Regarding sea level rise, Ms. Alschuler asked if an estimate of 36 inches by 2100 is sufficient. Brad McCrea responded that 36 inches is a mid-level estimate, though some BCDC applicants use a higher number.

Mr. Strang asked it if is realistic to think that the HOA would raise the platform in the event of sea level rise.

Mr. Hilk stated that the HOA will have responsibility for pier and open space area, and will have funding through maintenance and capital improvement projects to raise the pier to accommodate sea level rise.

Ellen Miramontes pointed out that Bay Plan policies require public access to be adaptable to sea level rise, or that equivalent public access be provided nearby.

Bob Batha added that the public access would be a requirement for the use of the housing, and should be viable for as long as the housing is used. For now, BCDC is focusing on on-site access, though in the future with sea level rise, public access in a different location might be more appropriate.

Regarding Phase B, Ms. McCann stated that the loop path is chopped up by the several smaller paths leading to the residences. She suggested providing a hierarchy of paths in which the loop path is smaller than the main Bay Trail.

Ms. Alschuler suggested moving the pathway closer to the residences. She asked how Phase B residents will access the waterfront without sidewalks on that side. She suggested making the Phase B public access area more of a place to stay rather than a place to pass through.

Mr. Banta responded that the front doors are alongside of residences and connect to paths along the west side. Currently there is a self storage business along western edge, and there will be a 10-foot-high fence along the property line, so it is not an ideal spot for a path or sidewalk. Mr. Roylance added that the crosswalks across A Street were included to allow these residents to get to the waterfront via A Street.

f. **Board Summary and Conclusions.** The Board made the following summary and conclusions:

(1) **A Street.** The Board recommended that the applicants reconsider A Street's cross section to make it a "greener, more handsome street" that emphasizes a connection to the water. The Board recommended rethinking the entry plaza to create an open connection to the water by decreasing the amount of parking and adding trees and/ or site furniture.

(2) **Oak Street.** The Board suggested that the applicants rethink the cross section of this pathway connection to the shoreline. The Board recommended repositioning the walkway within the 36-foot-wide area so that there would be more than four feet of planting on the eastern side near the street edge.

(3) **Water Access.** The Board noted that it is clearly possible and desirable to adapt the current design in the future to accommodate water access and provided their enthusiastic support for this.

(4) **Bio-retention Area.** The Board thinks that it is not realistic for this area to be used as recreational space, but thinks it is valuable visually and also perhaps as habitat.

(5) **Phase B Trails.** The Board recommended making the Bay Trail and secondary trails distinct in width and/or material, and eliminating or combining the several smaller paths leading from the residences to the open space.

(6) **Western Edge.** To provide access to the shoreline and open space from the Phase B residences, the Board suggested creating paths along the western edge of the two blocks that currently lack a path, or possibly creating a path down the middle of the blocks.

g. **Project Proponent Response.** Mr. Banta responded that they could certainly add more crosswalks on A Street to help people reach the waterfront. He said that the project proponents will incorporate the Board's comments as much as possible, and will submit updated exhibits as part of application process.

6. **Adjournment.** Ms. Alschuler adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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